

Education Cabinet

Two Kentuckians honored for their work with veterans employment

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FRANKFORT, Ky. – Two Kentucky Office of Employment and Training (OET) employees have been honored by a national organization for their work with veterans.

Daniel Ruth, a disabled veteran outreach program (DVOP) specialist at the Elizabethtown OET and David Moore, a local veterans employment representative (LVER) at the Louisville Preston Highway OET, were given awards by the Disabled American Veterans Organization (DAV) on June 13 in Louisville for their extraordinary employment service to Kentucky veterans. The organization chooses a specialist and a representative from each state to receive the annual awards.

"Daniel Ruth and David Moore have been very creative in reaching veterans and helping them access employment services and in promoting veterans to employers. They have provided services that are above what is normally required by the position," said David Kuhn, OET's veterans program coordinator for the eastern region of Kentucky. "As a group, veterans have more difficulty finding employment because they have all kinds of skills but no documentation such as a college degree. Our veterans representatives have to help them translate their skills from military terms into civilian work terms."

Kuhn said that veterans have the types of skills that employers are looking for such as dependability, maturity, responsibility, a sense of teamwork, ability to adapt to change and management skills but they need help with job searches and making that transition to a civilian labor force. For example, in the military they did not have to write resumes and interview for jobs, and they did not have to worry about what to wear for interviews because they wore uniforms in the military.

Ruth of Hodgenville said that being a disabled veteran has helped him to build a close bond with other veterans because he knows the military jargon and he knows what they have been through. Ruth said he offers veterans career guidance and makes them aware of benefits that help them assimilate into the civilian workforce. As a DVOP, Ruth looks for barriers to employment such as a lack of transportation or homelessness and tries to remove them.

One creative way that Ruth has reached veterans is by starting an outreach opportunity at the Larue County Public Library twice a month. "I have reached veterans that are either not aware of our program or can't drive to Elizabethtown. It's helped us have a success rate in a new community," Ruth said.

"I feel that all of us will always be soldiers and as a nation we cannot leave out veterans or their families behind. It was an honor to serve my country as a soldier but it's an even greater honor for me to serve veterans as a DVOP," Ruth said.

Also a veteran, Moore of Louisville understands the difficulty in making the transition from the military to the civilian labor force. He said that some of the veterans he serves have gone straight from high school into the military and then retired after 20 years of service and have never done an interview. "You have real opportunity to make meaningful differences in people's lives. Being a frontline worker I feel the pain of their reality. I'm not that far removed from them," Moore said.

Moore sees the enormous needs of the veterans he serves. He said it is essential for veteran representatives and all workforce development professionals to be experts in their knowledge of training programs, the labor market and finding high-gross, high-wage jobs. "I take this job very seriously. Job seekers come to me with the balance of their futures lying in my ability to provide that expert knowledge," he said.

Moore has successfully collaborated with other groups to represent OET at job fairs. He works with private employers to educate them about the benefits of hiring veterans and to get job requests. In addition, he has written articles for the national Veterans Transition Guide.

He said there are no typical days for him. One day may consist of talking to a veteran who is an ex-offender about his employment, then going to a meeting with a university president and then promoting veterans to employers at a job fair. "I have to be ready to serve a guy with a Ph.D. as well as a guy with a GED," Moore said.

"I'm in a unique position with unique insight on the frontline working with veterans. I'm at the crossroads where education, economic development and workforce development meet. It's one of the most interesting places in the world to be standing."

OET is an agency of the Department for Workforce Investment in the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet. The primary services of the office are to help individuals prepare for, secure, and maintain employment; assist employers in locating and selecting the best qualified workers for their job openings; and provide income maintenance to ease the financial burden on individuals who are out of work through no fault of their own.

The Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet coordinates learning programs from P-16, and manages and supports training and employment functions in the Department for Workforce Investment. For more information about our programs, visit www.educationcabinet.ky.gov or www.workforce.ky.gov, or call 502-564-6606.